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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: June 03, 2009

Summary: Reports on the release of defunct Jamaatud Daawa's chief Hafiz Saeed on a Lahore High Court order dominated front pages on Wednesday. All newspapers also highlighted reports that the "armed forces rescued 71 Cadet College Razmak students" who were kidnapped by Taliban Monday evening. Several major dailies reported that "Secretary Clinton hailed Pakistan's resolve" for taking on Taliban militants in Swat valley. U.S. Embassy's advice to American citizens "not to visit Peshawar" in the wake of repeated terrorist attacks in the provincial capital received prominent display. Also reported on front pages was news that the "security forces faced stiff resistance as they battled the Taliban militants for the control of Charbagh in Swat."

Several major dailies ran critical editorials on the abduction of dozens of students by the Taliban militants. Commenting on the episode the centrist national daily "The News," observed that the "most recent terrorist outrage, targeting students who were in many cases mere children, underscores why this war must be won." The prestigious English daily, "Dawn," opined that the incident "is another graphic reminder that the good Taliban/bad Taliban distinction is a failed policy, but one which the state continues to pursue." Whereas the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan," wrote: "The kidnapping of the students had unified the nation against the Taliban." End Summary.

News Stories

"LHC Orders Release Of Hafiz Saeed" "Dawn" (06/03)

"The Lahore High Court ordered on Tuesday the release of Jamaatud Dawa chief Hafiz Mohammad Saeed and said there was no sufficient ground to detain and link him to the Mumbai attacks."

"Hafiz Saeed Says He Is Against Suicide Attacks" "Dawn" (06/03)

"Chief of the banned Jamaatud Dawa, Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, and his close aide Colonel (retd) Nazir Ahmed were released from house arrest on Tuesday on Lahore High Court orders. Talking to newsmen after his release, Hafiz Saeed opposed suicide attacks and said he considered it his responsibility to persuade all elements fighting within Pakistan that maintaining peace was necessary."

"India 'Unhappy' Over Release" "The News" (06/03)

"The Indian government voiced its unhappiness on Tuesday over a Lahore High Court decision to release Jamaatud Dawa chief Hafiz

Mohammad Saeed who, India says, was linked to last year's Mumbai siege. 'We are unhappy that Pakistan has not shown the degree of seriousness and commitment it should have to bring to justice the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks,' Indian Home Minister P Chidambaram told reporters."

"India Asked To Refrain From Commenting On Court Decisions" "Dawn" (06/03)

"Pakistan urged India on Tuesday to refrain from commenting on court decisions and questioning its sincerity about action against terrorist outfits. 'Polemics and unfounded insinuations cannot advance the cause of justice in civilized societies. Legal processes cannot and must not be interfered with,' said Foreign Office Spokesman Abdul Basit while commenting on Indian External Affairs Ministry's criticism of the release of Jamaatud Dawa chief Hafiz Mohammad Saeed."

"Forces Rescue 71 Kidnapped Students" "The News" (06/03)

"The law-enforcement agencies on Tuesday recovered 71 out of a total 122 students of the Cadet College Razmak, who had been kidnapped by the Taliban from Bakakhel area of Frontier Region Bannu on Monday evening. There were conflicting reports about the students recovered from the Taliban's captivity and those still missing. Well-placed sources said 43 students and five teachers were still missing and are believed to have been shifted to the distant mountains of the Taliban's stronghold in Ladha, South Waziristan Agency."

"Clinton Hails Pakistan's Resolve" "Daily Times" (06/03)

"US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Monday said she was impressed by the Pakistan Army's assault on the Taliban in the Swat valley."

"U.S. Nationals Get Travel Warning For Peshawar" "The News" (06/03)

"American nationals were warned on Tuesday against traveling to Peshawar due to security threats as police beefed up security after intelligence reports claimed that four suicide bombers had been tasked to hit targets in the city. 'American officials and citizens associated with different organizations were directed by the US Embassy in Islamabad not to travel to and from Peshawar for the next 24 hours in response to a security threat,' an official said. The announcement came a day before the arrival of Special U.S. Envoy Richard Holbrooke in Islamabad."

"Taliban Fight Back In Charbagh" "The News" (06/03)

"Security forces faced stiff resistance as they battled the Taliban militants for the control of Charbagh in Swat Valley, suffering three casualties and killing 21 militants during the last 24 hours, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday."

"U.S. Rejects Complaint About Aid Delivery" "Dawn" (06/03)

"U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has rejected President Asif Ali Zardari's complaint that the United States has not delivered on its promises to help Pakistan deal with the aftermath of the Swat operation. 'I certainly understand the anxiety of anyone in Pakistan; they have taken on this really important challenge of trying to take on the Taliban, but we've been providing aid,' she said. 'We already disbursed \$110 million for the displaced people. We've got that out very quickly.'

"U.S. Seeks Effective Operation In Fata" "Dawn" (06/03)

"A U.S. general chosen to lead American and international forces in Afghanistan told a congressional hearing on Tuesday that effective military operations were key to disrupting and dismantling the safe havens of Taliban and Al Qaeda in Pakistan's restive tribal areas. At his confirmation hearing, Lt-Gen Stanley McChrystal told the Senate Armed Services Committee he did not believe the prospects for both cleaving Al Qaeda from the Taliban and for reincorporating the Taliban into the Afghan government were very bright."

"Zawahri Says Bloody Swat Obama's Gift To Muslims" "Daily Times" (06/03)

"Al Qaeda's second-in-command urged Egyptians to reject a visit by U.S. President Barack Obama to Egypt during which he plans to deliver a message to Muslims. Ayman Al-Zawahri, an Egyptian militant leader, described Obama as a 'criminal' and said his messages to Muslims had already been received (through) ... a bloody campaign against Muslims in Swat."

"President Urges Philanthropists To Adopt Conflict-Hit Villages In Swat" "Daily Times" (06/03)

"President Asif Zardari on Tuesday urged the business community, industrialists and philanthropists to adopt and reconstruct conflict-stricken villages of Swat."

"21 Terrorists Killed, 18 Captured: ISPR" "Dawn" (06/03)

"Security forces claimed on Tuesday to have killed another 21 terrorists and captured 18 in various areas of Swat. According to official figures, three soldiers laid down their lives and six others were injured."

"Two Killed, Four NATO Trucks Burnt In Chaman" "The News" (06/03)

"Dozens of unidentified armed men gunned down a police man and security guard of NATO supply terminal before setting on fire four trailers loaded with supplies for NATO forces in Afghanistan during the wee hours on Tuesday morning here, police said."

"Three Schools Blown Up In Mohmand" "The News" (06/03)

"Three more government schools were blown up in the militancy-hit Mohmand Agency late on Monday night by suspected militants, who planted explosive devices and blew them up."

"Sikhs & Others Sccumb To Militants Jazia Demand" "The News" (06/03)

"The non-Muslim communities including Sikhs, Hindus and Christians living in Khyber Agency have agreed to pay tax to the Bara-based Lashkar-e-Islam (LI) in exchange for ensuring their security in the area. Sources said LI had asked the non-Muslim communities in Bara, Chora, Karamna, Bazaar Zakhakhel and Tirah Valley of Khyber Agency to pay tax or leave the agency. The sources said the warning came from LI two days back following which the community agreed to pay the tax instead of leaving the area, where they are living for decades."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Tragedy Saved," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/03)

"A potentially explosive hostage situation has been averted through the prompt action of security forces. Had they not acted, engaging militants in a fierce gun-battle after talks failed 71 students and nine staff members of the army-run Razmak Cadet College in North Waziristan would have been whisked away to a secret location. . . But there are also lessons to be learned in what has happened. In Waziristan at least the militants remain largely untouched, their networks apparently intact. If there is to be success in the final goal of wiping out militancy - which after all is the raison d'etre of the battle we are seeing now, the operation must be extended fully and forcefully into the inhospitable stretches of Waziristan. . . The most recent terrorist outrage, targeting students who were in many cases mere children, underscores why this war must be won."

"Waziristan Simmers," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (06/03)

"The kidnapping of dozens of students (later recovered) of a cadet college located in the North Waziristan Agency is another graphic reminder that the good Taliban/bad Taliban distinction is a failed policy, but one which the state continues to pursue. . . The three phases of Operation Rah-i-Haq in Swat suggest that when the army scrambles unprepared to deliver a blow to its opponents, the

militants are able to repel the state more easily."

"Kidnapping Of Cadet College Students," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (06/03)

"An armed group kidnapped a number of a cadet college students and teachers at Bannu.... The kidnapping of the students had unified the nation against the Taliban. The so-called Taliban did not even think that the young abductees were their own sons and nephews."

"Unforgivable," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (06/03)

"The Taliban, despite "arrangements" with cooperative bureaucrats, have regularly burnt schools in the region and kidnapped people for money, and targeted the Shia community. What looks like shortsightedness springs from the period of time spent under a "joint rule" system. What is shocking is that the army has tolerated it in areas strategic for its land forces and the air force. Pakistan protested earlier this year when America's drone attacks targeted Bannu, killing two Al Qaeda operatives and two Taliban terrorists - a protest that looked like a defense of the condominium rather than a defense of Pakistan's sovereignty. Razmak College, a well-known institution that facilitates the entry of youth from the tribal areas into our armed forces, has narrowly escaped disaster. The cadets are justified in asking that the college be shifted, but it is the national obligation of the state to "shift" the Taliban from the area instead."

"Cadet College Students' Kidnapping: Miscreants Want To Prolong The Military Operation," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 10,000) (06/03)

"Almost all analysts feel that the operation in Swat, Malakand and other areas should be completed at the earliest and militants should be crushed completely. Since the security forces are tightening the noose around the militants, they can try to create problems for the government by targeting educational institutions or important commercial centers. The kidnapping of Razmak Cadet College students shows that these militants who call themselves Taliban are not only against girls' education but also want to instill fear in boys' mind about education."

"Cadets' Kidnapping And Anti-Terror Force," an editorial in Lahore-based populist Urdu daily "Waqt" (cir. 10,000) (06/03)

"There is a need for the U.S. to give all possible help to the Pakistani leadership at this point in time, provide technical support to the Pakistan army, and cooperate in the rehabilitation of the Swat affectees. We hope that the Pakistan Army will increase its security net so that incidents like the kidnapping of cadets are not repeated, and the designs of those who want to spread unrest in the country are foiled."

"Hafiz Saeed's Release And Indian Reaction," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (06/03)

"India is in pain due to the release of Hafiz Saeed.... India is actually perturbed over advocacy of Kashmiris rights by Hafiz Saeed.

The government of Pakistan should defend Pakistani court's verdict and make a befitting response to Indian propaganda."

"Snowballing Chaos," an op-ed by Masood Sharif Khan Khattak in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/03)

"It can easily be said that the current military operations are not going to achieve much if the political component of these military operations is absent.... The present high intensity military operations now need to be replaced by effective and real time intelligence operations backed by small groups of specially trained, highly mobile and effective helicopter borne troops.... The snowballing chaos must now be arrested and for that the government will have to make some sweeping changes in the personnel at the higher levels; it must look for people that talk less and do more on the quiet."

"Know Thy Enemies," an op-ed by Tanvir Zahid in the center-right

national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (06/03)

"The ongoing battle in the troubled areas is in fact against masked enemies hostile and inimical to the very existence of a Muslim country which has just celebrated another anniversary of its becoming the first nuclear power of the Ummah.... Cutting the long story short, the Talibans, the Al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, Mullah Umar and their followers are nothing but the American Agents in the garb of the Muslims and their intentions as such cannot be favorable to Pakistan and its people and even for Islam.... Now, Pakistan is being weakened internally and externally in the so-called War On Terror and the rulers in Islamabad are playing into their hands in complete disregard of the national interest."

"Bajaur Reignited," an op-ed by Nasim Zehra in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/03)

"However, another military operation may only be a needed step to undercut the power of the Taliban determined to establish their own authority at the cost of state authority. Equally, to block the external factor from heavily undermining Pakistan's own security the most active routes from Afghanistan need to be closed down or at least effectively guarded. But it requires Islamabad putting sufficient pressure through the Trilateral Border Commission on the Afghans."

"Have The Swat Taliban Been Routed," an op-ed by Rahimullah Yusufzai in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/03)

"However, no military action could be a complete success story. If one recalls, the army had driven out the Taliban from most of Swat valley in 2007 and 2008 also but the militants subsequently returned and, in fact, gathered further strength. This time around the military operation is bigger and sustained but at times excessive force was used and the bombing by jet-fighters and gunship helicopters and the shelling by long-range artillery guns not only caused civilian deaths and losses to property but also forced an unmanageable number of people to flee their homes and villages. . . The fact that almost all top Taliban commanders in Swat have avoided capture or death is also raising questions about the effectiveness and success of the military operation."

"The Total War," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (06/03)

"Rehabilitation of the uprooted is a most crucial phase of the campaign if the hearts and minds of the local population have to be won, and should not remained confined to words alone. The help that the international community and the local population are giving in the form of funds and other types of assistance should be utilized to the maximum benefit of the affected persons. The battle would only have been won when the authorities had succeeded in creating conducive living conditions."

"Is The US After Our Nukes," an op-ed by Ijaz Hussain in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (06/03)

". . . Before addressing these questions, a word about the American Ambassador to Islamabad Anne W Patterson's comment on media reports about the U.S. contingency plans. Strongly contradicting these reports, the other day she observed: 'I have seen this in media. I will say that it is all nonsense. It is not technically possible.' Ambassador Patterson's denial is understandable because, as a diplomat, she has to say certain things for the good of her country. Otherwise, how could she explain President Obama's statement in which he publicly confessed that all options were open in case of a threat to Pakistan's nukes? The 'all options' formulation obviously also includes a military option which requires the existence of a contingency plan for its execution. . . Finally, the question arises as to what the US should do to remove Pakistanis' apprehensions about its intentions for Pakistan's nukes. To begin with, it should forthwith stop the media blitz about Pakistan's nukes falling into terrorist hands. If the Americans have any concerns on this count, they should agree to communicate them to the Pakistani government through diplomatic channels. Second, the U.S. should issue an unambiguous statement renouncing any intention to have control over

Pakistan's nukes, which American leaders sometimes issue. Finally, it should help stem the flow of weapons from Afghanistan into Pakistan. If the U.S. undertakes these CBMs, they will go a long way in allaying Pakistanis' apprehensions about American intentions regarding their nukes."

"Nuclear Compromises - Connecting The Dots," an op-ed by Shireen M Mazari in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/03)

"It has now become routine for the US to focus on Pakistan's nuclear weapons whenever there is trouble within the country. Clearly, the U.S. has not recovered from its trauma of seeing a developing Muslim state acquire nuclear capability. Moreover, as one of the greatest proliferators since 1945 to Israel, the U.S. has always maintained hypocrisy over its non-proliferation stance and this has now been fully exposed with its 123 nuclear agreement with India. Nevertheless, the U.S. has continued to be relentless in targeting Pakistan's nuclear assets in one way or another. What has been of growing concern to some of us has been the seeming weakening of the Pakistani resolve on sustaining the credibility of our nuclear deterrence through constant improvement and increase in the nuclear arsenal - especially post-9/11. If individual incidents are collated together, the dismal picture unfolds more clearly."

"American Desperation," an op-ed by Ahmed Quraishi in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/03)

"America is desperate in Afghanistan. U.S. officials have launched a fresh charm offensive to pacify the alienated Pakistanis. A panicked and bankrupt Washington is also trying to scare Asia into doling out money to save America's failed occupation in Afghanistan. This is the time for Islamabad to demand Washington cease all the propaganda about Pakistan's nukes, about the fabled ten billion dollars in aid, and stop turning the world against Pakistan. The elected government needs to muster some guts to confront Washington on this instead of leaving all the tough talk to Pakistani military leadership. There is a golden opportunity out there to put a leash on CIA activities in Pakistan which we had consented to after 9/11. The American goal posts have shifted. Pakistan is no longer bound by the same deal."

"Indian Hue And Cry Over Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (06/03)

"India has expressed concern over American media reports of Pakistan being in possession of a large stockpile of nuclear weapons and has demanded of the international community to increase pressure on Pakistan for stopping its nuclear activity.... Indian has innumerable nuclear weapons while Pakistan hasn't crossed the limit of minimum deterrence; this is the difference between the nuclear programs of two countries.... Pakistan is the first nuclear power of the Islamic world which is why it is an eyesore for America and the West. America and the West don't look at Indian nuclear program, but they tend to worry about Pakistani one.... In order to combat Indian Propaganda, Pakistan should accelerate its diplomatic efforts to expose Indian nuclear program."

Patterson